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ABSTRACT

An educational program's characteristics are one of the main factors influencing the number of square feet needed per student. Listed are some initial questions facility planners can ask to help guide the facility design process with the educational program in mind. (GR)

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A CEFPI Brief on Educational Facility Issues

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Questions on Program Characteristics

Date Filed: November 1995
Issue Tracker: Dr. Art Wohlers

The characteristics of the educational program to be housed in a new or renovated facility are one of the main factors influencing the number of square feet needed per student. Listed below are some initial questions to ask. This is not intended to be a complete list but rather a starting point for educational facility planners. You will undoubtedly add to this list as you begin to work with the staff.

- Broadly speaking, what are the implications of the information and technology age upon educational facilities for the building you are planning?
- With technology advances, do you see any human problems which may be generated? If so, could there be any space implications?
- To what extent will learning be what John Dewey envisioned as "...a process of living and not a preparation for future learning?" If so, what could the space implications be for your situation?
- How extensive will the various aspects of technology be utilized in the new building? Where will computers be located in the building and what could be the implications for space and energy? What related equipment is envisioned?
- Will computers be located in classrooms as well as in computer laboratories? Will computer laboratories be available for class or student use on a demand basis? Will computer laboratories be required for the instructional areas such as English for composing reports or manuscripts, for example, and in mathematics and science for project development, calculations, and related activities?
- Will social interactions—games, discussions, field trips, interactive projections, and cooperative learning—be program features? If so, are there space implications involved?
- What features in the new building would you hope to guard against to reduce potential emotional stress? For example, noise control.
- What are the implications of curricular activities which rely heavily upon primary sources of data and manipulative materials for your new or renovated building?
- Will the learning settings be teacher dominated or teacher coached?
- Will students work primarily as individuals or will they work in teams? If they work in teams, what space implications would be involved?
- Will teachers adjust their teaching styles or pedagogy to the learning styles of their students? If it is anticipated that they will, what space implications could be involved?
- Will interactive, distance learning programs be involved in the programs in this new/renovated structure? What space implications do you envision will be required?
- At the secondary school level, will a small number of longer blocks of time or will a larger number of shorter periods be the mode of operation? If large blocks of time are to be the mode, what could be the implications for resource materials in the classrooms and in the resource center of the library? If numerous shorter blocks of time are the proposed

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practice, will students be assigned to classes each period of the day? If not, will they remain on campus? If on campus, where will they be accommodated? Will they be located in service area spaces such as a lunchroom, in a multipurpose room, or in a commons with work or leisure-time appointments?

- What class, team, or staff-student group sizes are contemplated?
- Will the program include large group activities such as dramatic, musical, or other large group events? Could such large group activities require specialized spaces and could these spaces require carefully conceived space relationships? What auxiliary spaces would be required, for example, a green room? What provisions will have to be made for audiences? To what degree can schedules provide for different groups to share the same facilities? Are there space implications for the nature of any stage setting which may be desired?
- Will the building operate on a year-round basis? Will climate control be required and what could be the space and energy implications?
- What could be the space implications for the library or resource center if:
 - Classroom instruction is provided primarily by a resource person(s)?
 - The pedagogical mode involves basic problem solving approaches?
- What percentages of the students to be enrolled in the building are likely to use the resource center or library at any given time?
- In mathematics classrooms, for example, will students be working with concrete materials and related activities to help them visualize mathematical principles? If so, what could be the implications for the classrooms or laboratories—furniture, equipment, supplies, and materials and space?
- In the science area, for example, will the programs require specialized laboratories for each subject area or will the projected laboratories be most effective educationally, operationally, and economically if planned as generic units, that is planned for multiple uses? What could be the space implications for either approach?
- As students mature and shift to taking greater responsibility for their roles in learning, what could be the implications for programs, for space and related features?
- Could the proposed spaces in a new/renovated building be so highly specialized that future changes in the instructional and learning styles would be difficult to accomplish?
- If instructional learning modes are to incorporate such activities as multi-age groupings, what could be the implications for space, furniture, equipment, and related features?
- What world-of-work or real-world-connections activities or experiences are likely to be involved in your programs and what are the space implications?
- If peer tutoring or other similar experiences are envisioned, what space provisions will be required?
- If the development of portfolios is likely to be included in the experiences in the new/renovated building, could secure storage provisions be required?
- What spatial relationships do you envision among curricular or service areas in the projected building that could have implications for space?
- What are the space and other special provisions which are required to accommodate handicapped persons? Will there be inclusion experiences in classes in which more than one teacher will be involved? Would this mode have space requirements? Could special spaces be needed for individual or small group experiences for these students, also?
- Where will teachers work in your new building when they are not regularly assigned to classroom tasks? Will classrooms be available during specified times for teacher use without classes being assigned to the classroom? Will space calculations consider such potential use by teachers?
- Are teachers and parents likely to confer during the school day? If so, what could be the space and equipment which would be required for effective communication? Conference

- rooms? Telephones in appropriate locations?
- Will itinerant staff members come to this building periodically? Where will they be housed to be most effective for all parties concerned?
 - Will volunteers be involved in various roles in the building and what could the space implications be for them to be most effective?
 - Will the instructional program focus primarily upon source information presented in the classrooms, in textual materials, or in problem solving situations? Depending on the focus or mode selected, what could be the space implications for the library or the learning resource center?
 - Do you envision any problems associated with islands of technology being generated throughout the building? If so, could there also be some space implications?
 - How extensive will the athletic and physical education and fitness programs be on the new campus and what will be the implications for girls and boys and for community groups as participants in activities—as spectators in activities? What auxiliary spaces could be required for home and visiting teams, locker rooms, equipment rooms, storage spaces, weight rooms, and outdoor spaces, for example. What service areas would be required?
 - What will the music and drama programs look like? What implications will they have for acoustics and for storage, practice, and performance space? What shops and service areas might be required?
 - What types of storage mentioned could be required in the new/renovated structure for the total operation to function most effectively?
 - What human services not suggested elsewhere need to be considered for personnel for them to operate effectively in the building?
 - Are there any special problems related to the environment, energy and water sources, disposal, mechanical, and other features in the setting in which the proposed building is to be located?
 - Is your technique for determining the required numbers of teaching stations program related?

No doubt the above list, as well as your own personal experiences, have triggered additional questions for you. And once you begin your inquiries with staff, you will find even more to add to this list. May it be a helpful planning tool for you.

ISSUETRACK is prepared by The Council of Educational Facility Planners, International as a service to its membership. CEFPI wishes to thank Dr. Arthur Wohlers of Planning Advocates, Inc., Delaware, Ohio, for preparing this compilation of questions to accompany his brief

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